

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR, US

SUBJ: FORMER PM MARKEZINIS' COMMENTS ON GREEK POLITICAL
SITUATION

SUMMARY: MARKEZINIS' PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS IN GREECE. CRITICIZES FORMER POLITICIANS
FOR OPPOSING HIS EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT ELECTIONS WHICH HE
SAYS HE WAS TRYING TO PERSUADE PAPADOPOULOS TO HOLD IN
FEB 1974 AFTER LIFTING MARTIAL LAW. END SUMMARY.

1. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION AT SOCIAL FUNCTION JAN 22,
FORMER PRIME MINISTER MARKEZINIS GAVE DCM HIS VIEWS ON
PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION AND NOV 25 COUP WHICH
DEPOSED HIM AND PAPADOPOULOS. MARKEZINIS PREFACED HIS
REMARKS BY SAYING HE HAD GIVEN UP POLITICS AT LEAST FOR TIME
BEING AND WAS WORKING ON A NEW VOLUME OF HIS HISTORY OF
GREECE. HE WAS ALSO WRITING A BOOK ON HIS 48 DAYS AS
PM WHICH HE PLANNED TO PUBLISH IN GREEK AND
ENGLISH AS SOON AS CENSORSHIP WAS LIFTED.

2. ALTHOUGH HE APPEARED TO BE HIS USUAL BOUNCY SELF,
MARKEZINIS SAID HE WAS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT GREECE'S
POLITICAL FUTURE. THE PRESENT PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE WAS
VERY BAD; EVERYONE WAS ANXIOUS AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE
ECONOMY AND STUDENT DISCONTENT WHICH COULD LEAD TO SOCIAL
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UNREST, POLITICAL DISTURBANCES AND REPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT

ACTION. HIS PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT GREECE WAS SUFFERING A SOCIAL MALAISE WHICH WAS STRENGTHENING THE EXTREME LEFT. THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF GREECE WOULD NOW BE DECIDED BY THE PEOPLE EITHER THROUGH ELECTIONS OR BY MOB ACTION, NOT BY THE GREEK MILITARY WHO HAD NO VIABLE PROGRAM.

3. MARKEZINIS SAID HIS CONSCIENCE WAS CLEAR BECAUSE HE HAD TRIED TO DO HIS DUTY TO HIS COUNTRY. THE GREEK MILITARY MISUNDERSTOOD THE PURPOSE OF HIS REFERENCE TO LENIN IN PRESS INTERVIEWS, WHICH WAS TO DISARM FOREIGN CRITICS, BUT HE DID NOT BLAME THEM BECAUSE MILITARY MEN WERE NOT EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND POLITICAL FACTORS. HE WAS VERY BITTER ABOUT FORMER POLITICIANS, HOWEVER, WHOM HE DID NOT EXPECT TO SUPPORT HIM BUT WHO IN THEIR OWN INTEREST AND THAT OF GREECE SHOULD NOT HAVE WORKED AGAINST HIM. HE PARTICULARLY CRITICIZED KANELLOPOULOS WHO REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE POLITICAL SITUATION WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT HE HAD IN MIND. MARKEZINIS SUSPECTED ANDREAS PAPANDREOU HAD OFFERED TO SUPPORT KANELLOPOULOS AS PRIME MINISTER OF A FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY, A TRICK THE LATTER FOOLISHLY FELL FOR WITHOUT REALIZING HE WOULD BE OUSTED BY PAPANDREOU IN A FEW MONTHS.

4. MARKEZINIS EXPLAINED HIS PLAN HAD BEEN TO HOLD TRULY FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN MID-FEB FOLLOWING LIFTING OF MARITAL LAW BY THE END OF 1973 AT THE LATEST. HE ADMITTED HE WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY PERSUADING PAPADOPOULOS WHO WANTED TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS UNTIL MAR 1974. MARKEZINIS SAID HE HAD ARGUED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SITUATION AND THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT WAIT AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO FORCE PEOPLE LIKE PAPANDREOU AND PESMAZOGLU TO PARTICIPATE BECAUSE EXCLUSION WOULD ONLY STRENGTHEN THEIR FOLLOWING. MARKEZINIS ALSO WANTED TO EXPLAIN HIS PLAN TO THE GREEK PEOPLE ON TV OR AT LEAST SEND PALAMAS TO THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING TO INFORM GREECE'S ALLIES. MARKEZINIS SAID HE TOLD PAPADOPOULOS SHORTLY BEFORE NOV 25 THAT IF THIS WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE HE WANTED TO RESIGN, TAKING FULL BLAME FOR FAILING AS PM. MARKEZINIS THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN A GOOD CHANCE OF PERSUADING PAPADOPOULOS BECAUSE THE LATTER WAS TIRED AND LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY

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TO RETIRE HIMSELF.

5. MARKEZINIS INSISTED THAT HIS SOLE POLITICAL AIM HAD BEEN TO BRING ABOUT ELECTIONS, NOT TO BE ELECTED, AND THAT HE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO WITHDRAW AS A CANDIDATE IF THAT WERE ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. HIS VIEW, WHICH HE STILL HELD FIRMLY, WAS THAT ELECTIONS OPEN TO ALL MUST PRECEDE, NOT FOLLOW A GOVT OF NATIONAL UNITY; OTHER-

WISE THE GOVT WOULD ENJOY NO POPULAR SUPPORT AND
OPPOSITION ELEMENTS WOULD CONTINUE TO WAR AGAINST IT.

6. DURING THE CONVERSATION, MARKEZINIS EXPRESSED PIQUE
THAT CONGRESSMAN FRASER HAD NOT CALLED ON HIM AS HE HAD
ON KANELLOPOULOS, MAVROS AND OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS.
DCM EXPLAINED THAT THESE CALLS HAD NOT BEEN ARRANGED BY
THE EMBASSY.
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